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Thursday, 17 Nov 2011

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Feature Focus - November 2011



“Churches are Coming Alive!”

Transforming Churches Throughout the SEC -- by Tim Downs

Across the Southeast Conference, churches are coming alive! We know that the conference has had a successful strategy for new church development, but beyond that, we have churches that are expanding and renovating their facilities, to serve new and growing ministries. Here are the stories of four of these churches, all of whom have found support in loans from the UCC, as well as consultation with the conference the national setting of the UCC, and other resources. They have each undertaken a major expansion or improvement of their facilities to serve the changing needs for ministry around them.

The following churches are approaching their individual campaigns in a variety of ways.



- First Congregational Church UCC**
| Atlanta, GA
- Holy Trinity Community Church UCC**
| Nashville, TN
- Pilgrimage United Church of Christ**
| Marietta, GA
- Pleasant Hill Community Church UCC**
| Pleasant Hill, TN

Read on to reflect on recent building projects at various SEC churches. We hope that you enjoy reading their updates and viewing some of the photos included within their articles. We know there are other churches across the SEC that have also gone through building campaigns. We would love to hear from you and know your experiences and any words of wisdom that you would like to pass on to the rest of the conference. We will be following up on this article with various resources that may be of assistance for other churches who may be considering undertaking a building campaign. I am sure the pastors of the congregations listed below will welcome any questions you may have in beginning your own campaign.

■ **First Congregational Church | Atlanta, GA**

Updates on Our Building Project By Betty Groves Thomas, Committee



UCC News

UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

Faith coalition applauds net neutrality ruling, offers webinar
Advocating to maintain principles of equal access to Internet resources and bandwidth, the United Church of Christ Office of Communication, Inc. (UCC OC Inc.) and the World Association for Christian Communication, North America (WACC North America) are offering a free Dec. 6 webinar to inform faith communities' use of new technologies and the importance of net neutrality.



Updates on Our Building Project -- By Belle Graves Thomas, Committee



Lusk & Company, the General Contractor, has finished the grading of the Memorial Garden behind the church building, and constructed the masonry seat wall that runs along Courtland Street and behind the Avis Building (Fig. 1). The grass in the Memorial Garden will be planted, later in the fall.

Bovard Studio was on-site yesterday to pick-up the Watts Stewardship stained glass window, and other windows for refurbishing in their studio in Iowa (Fig. 2). Bovard will return later in the fall to re-install the Watts Window, and repair the exposed stained glass windows in the Atrium.

The erection of the fourth and final, steel truss was inspected and approved. The installation of the IHVAC ductwork in the attic that hangs from the steel trusses has begun (Fig. 3). This ductwork will supply the air conditioning that will cool the renovated Sanctuary space.

Lusk poured the concrete steps and slab that connects to the new east entrance. Installation of the glass panels in the curtain wall at the east entrance will start soon.

- Rev. Dwight Andrews
Rev. Dwight Andrews , Pastor



■ Pleasant Hill Community Church UCC | Pleasant Hill, TN

Pleasant Hill UCC Renovation Almost Complete

-- By Rev. Tom Warren, Pastor

Beginning in January, the Pleasant Hill Community Church has been systematically dismantled, expanded, and rebuilt. Along with a completely renovated sanctuary, including additional seating for 100 more congregants, our building program has included the addition of an all-glass chancel area, chairs instead of pews, a state-of-the-art sound system, and new classroom, office space, and storage areas. Part of our renovation has included a geo-thermal heating and cooling system which is not only "green," but will in the future be very cost effective. Boyce Hall, our primary fellowship space has been expanded and will include an area for our library, Equal Exchange coffee sales, and third world crafts.

**You can see why we are so excited as a congregation
about moving into our enlarged facility.**

Pleasant Hill Church Rebuild Pleasant Hill

Church Rebuild

Outside the building we have incorporated a new church tower with the U.C.C. cross and orb rising from the top for all to see. Additionally, our Memorial Garden is being expanded and beautified, with doors leading to the garden directly from our sanctuary. We will now worship looking out upon Main Street in Pleasant Hill ("the world") while keeping our eye on the "saints" of the church in our memorial garden.

We anticipate moving into our new building early in November, with dedication ceremonies planned for the weekend of January 6, 7, and 8th of 2012. Come, you are all invited to this very special time in the life of our congregation.

- Rev. Tom WarrenRev. Tom Warren , Pastor

For more information, [please link here to read](#) an earlier article ***Pleasant Hill Ground Breaking*** published in the Conference Connection.

■ Holy Trinity Community Church, UCC | Nashville, TN

"Imagine ... a Hope and a Future" -- By Rev. Cynthia Andrews-Looper, Pastor

We are
excited
about our
future at
Holy
Trinity



Community Church! During the month of October (2011), we are celebrating 15 years as an affirming congregation that believes deeply everyone is welcome. In 1995, Pastor Cindy and 25 others stepped out in faith, being obedient to God's calling, creating a church filled with the Holy Spirit. Over the course of our first 15 years, we have witnessed many changes with the most consistent change being growth.

Today, our church offers three worship services every Sunday to accommodate those wanting to join in fellowship to worship and honor God each week. We have approximately 300 souls touched by the Spirit weekly. The sermons are available on our web site for those who cannot make it to services. During the transition from one service to the next, our hallways are lined with brothers and sisters in Christ patiently waiting to honor God. We clearly need more space.

This space need led us to prayerful consideration and research about our options. After countless hours in prayer and meetings, reviewing new sites and existing buildings, the congregation voted to embark upon a Capital Campaign to add onto our existing building. "IMAGINE... A Hope and A Future" was officially launched



and the excitement for our future can be felt across the church.

With the expanded building, we can expand our existing ministries. We can open our arms to more who are lost and hurting and point them to their Healer. We can add new staff to assist with the growing needs of our

congregation. We can say "yes" to new ministries. We can house simultaneous seminars and fellowship opportunities without needing to transition rooms as a result of our current space limitations.



Stepping out in faith is often intimidating. But then, the Lord has shown us time and time again through the messages in His Word, if what He calls His faithful to do could be done by them alone, His glory would not be known. Looking back on the history of our church, seeing what He has done so far,

and sensing what is ahead, there is no doubt His glory will be known!

We are currently in the midst of our "Imagine ... a hope and a future" campaign.

We kicked off the public phase on October 20. It will run through the month of December. Our minimal goal is 1.9 million. Our mid range goal is 2.48 million and our challenge goal is 3.26 million. If we raise our mid range goal or above, we will be giving to the SEC campaign. We are very hopeful that we will hit our mid range goal and are praying that we will hit our challenge goal. Our plan is to build a new sanctuary that will seat at least 450 and expand the education and counseling space. The current sanctuary will be used for a fellowship hall, as well as other ministry needs like Room in the Inn, large meeting space, etc. This campaign is creating an amazing excitement among our congregation as we imagine all that God has for us in our future.

If you have the opportunity to join us, please do!

We'd love to meet you and worship with you!

God's favor and blessings upon you!

God's favor and blessings upon you!

- Rev. Cynthia Andrews-Looper Rev. Cynthia Andrews-Looper , Pastor

■ Pilgrimage United Church of Christ | Marietta, GA

Becoming a Stained Glass Church -- By Rev. Kimberleigh Buchanan, Pastor

In 2004, in the midst of the nation-wide UCC ad campaign, Pilgrimage began to experience significant growth. Our small space was quickly becoming too-crowded. We did two things in response. First, we started a second worship service. Second, we appointed a Task Force to study growth patterns of our church and the area, to project growth into the future, then to make a proposal for what to do in response to those projections.

After many months of work, we determined that we wanted to stay on our current property rather than move. Because our property is small—about 3 buildable acres—we engaged an architect to work with us and see whether we could build a new facility. After many more months of work, the architect told us there is space for new buildings and parking on our small spot of land. He proposed beginning our expansion by building a new worship space and additional parking.



Pilgrimage Rebuild Pilgrimage Rebuild

At that point, we undertook a feasibility study to see whether we had the financial resources to fund a \$2.7 million project. The feasibility study revealed that we were not yet ready to fund a project nearly ten times our church's annual budget. After 3 years of hard work, it was disappointing to realize we would not be able to build.

A few months later, at a fellowship meal in our worship/fellowship space, one of our members got up, began moving around the room and dreamed up a renovation. He imagined moving the classrooms that ran alongside the worship space out of the building, shifting the worship space 90 degrees creating a more horizontal than vertical seating arrangement, painting, installing new lighting, replacing our metal folding chairs with more comfortable seating, and removing a couple of walls.

He also put together a budget for the renovation—in the ball park of \$85,000. We also looked into renting a 4-classroom modular unit. Installation of the unit would cost \$6,000 or so and rental fees would run around \$500/month. With contingencies, it was looking like \$100,000 or so would do it. That even included

newly designed and installed stained glass windows. Sounds great, right?

[Link here to see a power point presentation](#) created to make proposal to church membership.

Then the fire marshall came to visit. From him we learned that putting a new modular unit on the property would require installing a new fire hydrant. Fire hydrants—and all the things that accompany them--we learned are quite expensive. Then there's the new drainage system and landscaping also required by the county. The total cost of our renovation quickly rose to \$250,000...at the time, about equal to our annual budget.

Despite many complications with the fire hydrant process, the renovation went smoothly. The renovation itself was completed in less than a year. Two and a half years into the three year funding process, we are well on our way to fully paying off the renovation this coming summer.

- [Rev. Kimberleigh Buchanan](#)[Rev. Kimberleigh Buchanan](#) , Pastor

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